

ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY OF TURKEY

BULLETIN No. 8

January 1973

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EDITORIAL

Firstly we must apologise for the absence of the bulletin over the past year. We hope that it has now got over its difficulties and will continue to appear twice yearly as in the past. The format has been changed to allow for both quicker and cheaper production.

There have recently been a number of new appointments to positions within the society. Tony Vittery (Treasurer) has agreed to take up the extra burden of dealing with membership enquiries and the sale and distribution of reports. Mark Beaman is to become closely involved with the preparation of future reports and will help with the editing of the 1970/71 report and Mike Harrison has taken over the editing of the Bulletin.

In Turkey much is going on. A new conservation society is being formed in Istanbul by Salih and Belkis Acar, and we wish them every success. We also congratulate Dr. Zekai Bayer who has been made an award for his National Parks work in Turkey, which was presented at the Second World Conference on National Parks, Jackson Lake, Wyoming, U.S.A. in September. The Bald Ibis (*Geronticus eremita*) colony is to be the subject of a conservation project backed by the World Wildlife Fund in 1973. Details of this appear later in the bulletin as do reports on the autumn migration on the Bosphorus and the Asvan project.

SOME SUMMER AND AUTUMN RECORDS

Richard Porter

We thought members would be interested to hear of a few of the more unusual records that have been received for the summer and autumn of 1972. This is not a comprehensive report as there are still many records to be submitted. The records are largely unchecked and should not be regarded as authenticated.

Flamingos (*Phoenicopterus ruber*) were again proved breeding at Tuz Golu and at least 300 pairs located, but the story wasn't so good for the Bald Ibis (*Geronticus eremita*) where the colony at Birecik was down to only about 25 pairs - an article on the fate of this bird and the proposed World Wildlife Fund Project appear elsewhere in this Bulletin. The nests of 20 pairs of Night Heron (*Nycticorax nycticorax*) and 1 pair of Little Egret (*Egretta garzetta*) were found at Van and Cattle Egrets (*Bubulcus ibis*) were present on the Goksu delta in spring. White Pelicans (*Pelecanus onocrotalus*) were seen on many wetlands in large flocks but the record number was the 1,000 at Van in June. A Great Snipe (*Gallinago media*) near Alanya on 2nd May was the most unusual wader reported. White-headed Ducks (*Oxyura leucocephala*) were again seen on several wetlands during the breeding season, notably at Van and Cavuscu Golu (Central Plateau). A female Velvet Scoter (*Melonnitta fusca*) with seven young was seen in August at the crater lake on Nemrut Dag where the species was first discovered as a breeding bird in Turkey in 1967.

Among the more interesting raptor records were the number of pairs of Montagu's Harriers (*Circus pygargus*) found in the breeding season particularly in the region of Dogubayazit in N.E. Turkey and on the Central Plateau where young were raised successfully in several areas. A late Hen Harrier (*Circus cyaneus*) was seen at the Goksu delta on 29 April. Eleonora's Falcons (*Falco eleonora*) were also seen on the southern coast, several being present in the breeding season around Alanya. The more interesting gull records were two adult Audouin's Gulls (*Larus audouinii*) in early May near Alanya and a very large passage of Little Gulls (*Larus minutus*) in the Giresun Trabzon area in mid-August - about 530 birds being seen on the 15th.

Passerine records of note included Grey-headed Woodpecker (*Picus canus*) at Istavri (Eastern Black Sea Coastlands) in June, parties of Rose-coloured Starlings (*Sturnus roseus*) in the Van and Erzurum area also in June. A pair of Masked Shrikes (*Lanius nubicus*) raised 5 young at Kamisli at 2,000 meters in the Taurus mountains. Six pairs of Redstarts (*phoenicurus phoenicurus*) in the village of Istavri in June were considered to be of the race *p.p. samamisticus*.

Probably the most interesting record however, though not really unexpected was the breeding of Dead Sea Sparrows (*Passer moabiticus*) in the tamarisks on the Goksu Delta on the Mediterranean coast. Birds had been seen in the breeding season there in 1970 and 71 but this was the first time breeding had been proved.

In the last Bulletin we said that the Little Swifts (*Apus affinus*) seen at a small town near the Gulf of Iskenderun and the 8 Great Northern Divers (*Gavia immer*) on the Black Sea coast near Espiye were the first records of those species for Turkey. As was rightly pointed out by 2 of our members this was incorrect. In the case of Little Swift there are three previous records in the literature dating from 1881 when two were reported for Antakya; in the spring of 1962 and 67 there were records for Silifke and Tarsus respectively.

Great Northern Divers were reported from Istanbul on 13 May 1964 (one) and 29 April 1968 (eight), although no details or descriptions are available for reference.

THE NEXT BIRD REPORT AND SUBMISSION OF RECORDS.

The next report to be published is that for 1970-71 and it is hoped that this will be ready by Spring 1973.

We are now collecting records for 1972, and almost certainly, as in the past, these will be produced in a biannual report along with the data for 1973.

All records should be sent to the Editors, Ornithological Society of Turkey, c/o RSPB, The Lodge, Sandy, Beds, England.

Records should be listed under species (not please under localities) and using only one side of a sheet. Species should be listed in the order used in the "Check List of the Birds of Turkey". (i.e. that used by C. Vaurie in "Birds of the Palearctic Fauna").

Example layout:

Sterna hirundo (J.D.R.V. - observers initials).

W. Anatolia 18th July, 1972. Colony of 20 pairs APOLYONT GOLU.
(Region*)

* A map showing the boundaries of the geographical regions of Turkey can be found in the "Check List".

A few copies of the 1968/69 Report are still available, price £1.60. (post free), also a few copies of the "Check List of the Birds of Turkey", price 55p. (post free) from OST, c/o RSPB, The Lodge, Sandy, Beds, England.

BOSPHORUS MIGRATION, AUTUMN 1974

Mark Beaman

The autumn migration at the Bosphorus was covered by a group of British, Dutch and Danish observers, from the 13 of August to the 4 of October.

For the first time the Princes Islands, in the Sea of Marmara, were systematically watched during the latter part of August and the first part of September. They proved to be an important route for migrating White Storks (*Ciconia ciconia*) and Honey Buzzards (*Pernis apivorus*) during north-easterly winds - when the numbers seen at the Princes Islands vastly exceeded the counts at Camlica. Some 9,000 Honey Buzzards and 80,000 White Storks were recorded there - taking the totals of these species to a new peak of 25,698 and 209,851 respectively.

Black Storks (*C.nigra*) were also up, with 7,208 recorded. Apart from the more usual Cranes (*Grus grus*), a number of less typically Bosphorus species were seen - including a Flamingo (*Phoenicopterus ruber*) and a White Pelican (*Pelecanus onocrotalus*); the latter soaring amidst a flock of White Storks!

Black Kites (*milvus migrans*) totalled 2,617 and 5,313 Levant Sparrowhawks (*Accipiter brevipes*) were recorded. On the 15 of September of 2,400 Levant Sparrowhawks passed, in flocks of up to 500! Buzzards (*Buteo buteo*) totalled 18,214; a figure considerably less than the 30,000 which passed in the autumn of 1969, but greater than the average for the past few years.

Other species included Osprey (*Pandion haliaetus*) 2, Sparrowhawk (*Accipiter nisus*) 2, Goshawk (*Accipiter gentilis*) 2, Imperial Eagle (*Aquila milvus*) 2, Hen Harrier (*Circus cyaneus*) 523, Marsh Harrier (*C. aeruginosus*) 2, 110, Booted Eagle (*Hieraaetus pennatus*) 11, Griffon Vulture (*Gyps heliaca*) 2, Montagu's Harrier (*C. pygargus*) 3, Pallid Harrier (*C. macrourus*) 3, Egyptian Vulture (*Neophron percnopterus*) 554, Saker (*Falco cherrug*) 13, fulvus) 115 (83 of these passing on one day), Eleonora's Falcon (*F. eleonora*) 1, Merlin (*F. columbarius*) 1 - an unusual record for the Bosphorus, and 6 Red-footed Falcons (*F. vespertinus*). The same probably applies to the increase in the numbers of Kestrel (*F. naumanni/tinnunculus*). As usual, the locally breeding Hobbies (*F. subbuteo*) confused species of this species.

The steady increase in the past six years has been continued in 1966, but 18,800 was recorded in early October. Short-toed Eagles (5,000 of these in two hours) were also recorded in greater numbers than before. Both only two (5,000 goes to the Lesser-spotted) were observed on the 26 of September, an unprecedented increase.

The steady increase in the numbers of several species of raptors at the Bosphorus, over the past six years, is clearly of some interest. This increase is most dramatically shown by the Lesser-Spotted Eagle - 4,900 in 1966, but 18,800 in 1971! Unfortunately there is no evidence of a real increase in numbers, increasing larger numbers seen. The observers appear to account for the efficiency by successive teams of having several watchpoints; on that every day was seen. The strated on the 24 September; manned larger numbers seen. The were seen from Buyuk Camlica - mainly day some 5,400. The Kocuk Camlica (which is screened from the sea) was seen by teams of more than 2,000 were seen during the same period. The means unusual, but only the large numbers of raptors seen by the observers.

THE BALD IBIS OR WALDRUPP.
For the unique colony
the cliffs in the
narrates in

BALD IBIS OR WALDRUPP.

For the unique colony of Bald Ibis (*Geronticus eremita*) that breed in the cliffs in the centre of the town of Birecik on the edge of the Euphrates in south east Turkey, the future doesn't look good.

First reference to the existence of a colony was in 1879 by the ornithologist Danford, but no count is available until June 1967, when Ummerloeve counted about 1300 birds. Then followed a decline and by 1967 there were only about 50 pairs. The decline is even more rapid now believed to be only 20-25 pairs. It is now believed to be only 20-25 pairs. It is now believed to be only 20-25 pairs.

ecologists and the total world population is estimated at only 20-25 pairs.

Ornithologists have become increasingly worried about the birds' future and in May 1972 a party of Turkish conservationists and World Wildlife Fund officials visited Birecik in Spring 1973. The co-ordinators will be Salih Acar and Udo Hirsch and among the suggestions they will be looking at will be the artificial enlargement of the colony; at the moment the nests construction of a light fence over the colony; at the houses above have no protection from stones and rubbish thrown out of the houses above.

the nesting ledges. They will try to curtail the erection of new houses close to the colony and also consider the clearing of houses under the colony. It has been suggested that some 28 houses need be removed and a small public garden constructed - obviously a move such as this will require funds for compensation to the villagers and a lot of goodwill. After all it is vital that the people of Birecik, particularly the school children, are behind the whole project.

Richard Porter.

KUSLARIMIZ (OUR BIRDS)

Belkis Acar has just written her second book following the successful publication of Koçmen Kuslar (Migratory Birds). This handy sized publication can really be considered as Turkey's first popular bird book and covers 117 species. Each is illustrated in silhouette form, by Belkis's husband Salih Acar, and the accompanying text deals with description, habitat, behaviour and distribution, the notes for the latter being taken from the O.S.T.'s Bird Reports and "Check List".

Throughout the text are some fine photographs by the German photographer Udo Hirsch, and the book comes in an attractive pack with two posters based on photographs by Mr. Hirsch, a small notebook which contains a Check List of Turkish birds and postcards on which records of birds can be sent to Mrs. Acar.

The book is obtainable from Red House Press, P.K. 142 Istanbul, at a price of 15 Turkish Lira (about 40p).

THE ASVAN PROJECT
By Michael Harrison

This project originally came into being because The British Institute of Archaeology in Ankara wanted an up to date report of the avifauna of the area surrounding their dig at Asvan near Elazig in Eastern Turkey. The report was required for comparison with a proposed list of species discovered through their bones, to have been in the archaeological periods covered by the dig. Other similar studies of the area were also being made, zoology, geology and sociology of the area.

The location of Asvan on the river Murat just above its confluence with the Euphrates provided several points of ornithological interest and it was decided to expand the survey to cover these as well. Firstly the Euphrates river valley will be completely flooded within area and as such will be is being dammed at Keben, and the whole study area and Turkey and so. This will provide the largest fresh-water perimeter in the next year or so. of great ornithological and Murat valleys provided a possible route for the avifauna so that the situation could be monitored as the lake had its effect. Secondly, the Euphrates and other smaller birds coming east of the Black Sea migration of raptors and other species. So we instituted a ringing programme across to the Syrian/Israeli coast. We prove this, and also and moving across the hope that we might get recoveries to provide a ringing programme in the hope that we might get recoveries to prove this, and also to provide biometric data on various species.

Two visits have been made to the area. The first in 1971 when Roy Smith, Paul Andrew and myself spent three weeks at the village in August, and the second in 1972 when William Dick, Peter Lack and myself covered three weeks in September. Unfortunately, because of the time of year, it proved difficult to define the status of some species, particularly in differentiating between summer visitors to the site and passage migrants. The results of this work are shortly to be published in full, but I will mention here some of the more interesting observations made.

Our main study area lay within a three Km. radius of the village of Asvan and comprised four distinct ornithological habitats. The village itself comprises about 70 two-storey mud-brick houses and provided the biggest concentration of trees in the area. These are mostly fairly small Mulberry trees, though Poplars occurred around the three fresh-water springs that provided every available nest site, and Scops Owl (Ciconia ciconia) used every available nest site, and Scops Owl (Otus scops), Syrian Woodpecker (Dendrocopos syriacus), Roller (Coracias garrulus) and Hoopoe (Upupa epops) were to be seen frequently among the houses.

The flood plain is roughly semi-circular in shape, lying between a bend in the river and the escarpment on which the village is situated. Approximately 2 Kms. long and 1 Km. at its widest, it can be considered in two parts. The western end is completely uncultivated and provides a large area of dense willow and tamarisk scrub which required a machete for access in some places. It was here that most of our ringing took place. 28 species were caught, 16 of which were warblers including Savi's (Locustella luscinioides), Marsh (Acro palustris), Great Reed (Acro arundinaceus), Olivaceous (Hippolais pallida), Menetries (Sylvia mystacea) and Rufous Bush Chat (Cercotrichas galactotes). Non-passerines included Bluethroat (Luscinia svecica) and Black-Headed Bunting (Emberiza melanocephala). The eastern end of the flood plain is cultivated for melons, sunflowers, maize and vegetables, and here Quail (C. coturnix)

Red-Backed Shrike (*Lanius collurio*) and Hobby (*Falco subbuteo*) were the typical birds.

The river itself is about 30-40 m. wide and fairly fast flowing. The banks of the river on the village side consist of shingle, sand and gravel, giving way in places to mud and at one point a stagnant pool approximately 100 m. in length. Water birds included Garganey (*Anas querquedula*), Teal (*Anas crecca*) and a single Great Crested Grebe (*Podiceps cristatus*). Ruff (*Philomachus pugnax*), Little Stint (*Calidris minuta*) and Wood Sandpiper (*Tringa glareola*) were often to be seen on the pool, while further up river parties of Crane (*Grus grus*) and Black Stork (*Ciconia nigra*) could be found. Singles of Marsh Sandpiper (*Tringa stagnatilis*) and Lapwing (*Vanellus vanellus*) were also recorded.

The high land behind the village was dry and rolling, cut by wadis, and for the most part farmed for wheat on all the possible areas. Scrub vegetation occurred in the wadis wherever perennial streams flowed and the odd Mulberry tree broke the skyline. Harriers (*Circus* sp.), Stone Curlew (*Burhinus oedipnemos*), Lesser Grey Shrike (*Lanius minor*), Short-Toed Eagle (*Circus gallicus*) and five species of Wheatear (*Oenanthe* sp.) were recorded here.

Raptors over the site were spectacular with 18 species being seen within a radius of 10 Km. In the second week of September, there was a large passage of Honey Buzzards (*Pernis ptilorhynchus*) with up to 550 being seen in a day. A White-Tailed Eagle (*Haliaeetus albicilla*) was seen fishing on the river, and singles of Goshawk (*Accipiter gentilis*), Levant Sparrowhawk (*Accipiter brevipes*) and Booted Eagle (*Hieraaetus pennatus*) occurred during the same period. Marsh Harriers (*Circus aeruginosus*) occurred on the 17-19 September and three sightings were made of male Hen Harriers (*Circus cyaneus*) and one of a male Montagu's Harrier (*Circus pygargus*) in addition to several views of 'ring-tails'.

Several records of Great Bustard (*Otis tarda*) were reported by the archaeologists, and the villagers told us that parties of eight were not unusual in October, though we had only one sighting. The main protection for these birds which are very highly prized by the villagers for food, seems to lie in the laws which prevent all but the village bekce from owning rifles. Shot guns are comparatively useless against such a shy bird.

Amongst the breeding birds, Pied Kingfishers (*Ceryle rudis*) were notable. A pair raised five young on the river below the village. A single common Kingfisher (*Alcedo atthis*) was also seen. Menetries Warblers were also thought to breed in quite large numbers, over 60 being caught in the two years.

Other interesting records included four Red-Tailed Wheaters (*Oenanthe xanthopyrma*), possible the most westerly record for this species. Although our descriptions for this species agreed closely with that in "The Birds of Britain and Europe" (Heinzel, Fitter, Parslow 1972), it would appear that this is not the nominate race, and I would be glad to hear from anyone who has experience of this bird in Turkey, Iran or other parts of its range.

We also investigated methods of catching birds employed by the villagers. These included the use of lines comprising 100 horse-hair snares which were

placed around a captive male Chukar (*Alectoris chukar*). The calling male attracted both males and females of the species in the breeding season, and those that came were quickly ensnared. Rosy-coloured Starlings (*Sturnus roseus*) were caught in large numbers by children who climbed on the houses at night and simply snatched the roosting birds from the Mulberry trees. A clever child could take 20 to 30 birds in an evening.

The ornithological potential of this area is going to increase greatly in the next few years as the reservoir is completed. Further work is envisaged in the attempt to monitor the changes that the lake will bring about. I would be particularly interested to hear from anyone who has visited or intends to visit the Euphrates/Murat valley in this area, or who would be prepared to take part in any future studies there.

ARTICLES FOR BULLETIN

I am often approached by people thinking of going to Turkey who want to know either where to go for birds or more often whether there is any particular project that they could help in. For this purpose, it would be very useful if we could use the bulletin for an interchange of ideas for possible future studies or co-ordinated observation of either species or places.

I would be very glad to hear from members with the possible view of printing letters about this or other topical subjects. Please continue to send in articles and let us know of your recent activities.

Editor.